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THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTS GOVERNMENT, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION AND NEW FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

On 4th December, the National Council and the Council of States assembled for their first session of the new (38th) legislative period of four years' duration. For the third time, National Councillor Karl Dellberg (Valais, former Socialist and re-elected as an independent candidate), opened the session as oldest M.P. He used his opening address to ask the country for more support to poorer nations, but also to see to it that the sixth of the Swiss population, which he claimed to be in material, cultural or spiritual need, be raised to higher levels, not to forget the aged and the invalids. He spoke up for the farming community and for a better distribution of the national wealth — of the 3 million breadwinners, said Mr. Dellberg, only one-tenth was independent, and he pleaded for the welfare of all Confederates. He declared the session open with the postulate "*Mit Mut an die Arbeit!*"

Parliament then proceeded to elect its President for 1967/68. The Vice-President Dr. Hans Conzett (Farmers' and Citizens' Party, Zurich) was chosen. He is the seventeenth Zurich M.P. who has presided the National Council since 1848.

Dr. Max Aebischer (Social Christian Conservatives, Fribourg), was elected Vice-President.

The Council of States elected its Vice-President Councillor of States Emil Wipfli (same Party, Uri) to the Presidency of the Second Chamber and chose the farmer from Malans (living at Dagmersellen, Lucerne), Councillor Christian Clavadetscher, as Vice-President for the new period.

On 14th December, the highest authority of the country, the Federal Assembly, i.e. the two united Chambers, met to conduct the elections of Government and Chancellor. The session was opened by *Nationalratspräsident* Dr. H. Conzett.

When the elections of the Government took place in 1963, some unpleasant demonstrations occurred. Voices were raised that in order to prevent similar manifestations of disfavour in the future, elections should be undertaken *en bloc*. Better judgment prevailed, and no change was made. Consequently, each of the seven members of the Federal Council had to present himself for re-election according to seniority.

The highest number of votes was cast for the latest member, Federal Councillor Nello Celio, who received 180 votes, which is considered a sign of appreciation of the way he has conducted his Department (Military). On the other hand, the retiring President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Roger Bonvin, stood lowest in favour with 151 votes, not surprisingly in view of the fact that

his handling of finances has caused much criticism.

With the elections of the seven members, speakers combined demands for a new distribution of Departments. Whilst the Federal Councillors are not elected as expert Ministers in their fields, and the Government takes corporate and collective responsibility, it is nevertheless important that a man of Federal Councillor Celio's acknowledged abilities and integrity should be given a more important office, preferably that of Minister of Finance, replacing Monsieur Bonvin. Both the Liberals and the "Landesring" have expressed their opinions in this direction.

Parliament next elected the President of the Confederation for 1968. For the second time, Federal Councillor Spuehler has become Head of the Government. The first time was in 1963. The Cabinet used to consist of members of Liberal conviction, and it was only gradually that candidates with other political tenets were accepted. In 1891, the first Conservative was elected to the Government. In 1929, the first Farmer entered the Federal Council, the astute and forthright Rudolf Minger. At last, in 1943, the fourth large Party, the Socialists, succeeded in getting a representative into the Government. It was Federal Councillor Ernst Nobs who was a member for eight years and became President for one year during that time. He was succeeded by Prof. Max Weber who, however, resigned in 1953 when his finance proposals were rejected, and before he had a chance of becoming President. No further Social Democrat got into the Government until 1959 when Councillors Spuehler and Tschudi became the Socialist representatives amongst the four new members.

Dr. Willy Spuehler was born in Zurich on 31st January 1902. He considers himself of working-class stock. He was privileged to go to university where he studied economics. His successful career took him into the Zurich Municipal Government. From 1942 up to his election to the Federal Council, he was Minister of Health and Economics in Zurich. For 17 years he sat on the National Council, and for the last four years previous to his election to the Federal Government, he served as Councillor of States.

For the first six years, he was in charge of the Federal Department of Communications and Energy, and at the beginning of 1966, he took over the Political Department.

Once again, like in 1963, the President's Vice-President was elected in the person of Federal Councillor Ludwig von Moos, Head of the Department of Justice and Police.

In autumn, it was announced that Federal Chancellor Dr. Charles Oser would retire at the end of the year. He

was born on 17th February 1902, a citizen of Basle and Sion. He studied law in Lausanne and Berne and joined the Federal Chancellery in 1928. In 1944, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor and as such Secretary to the Council of States. Since his election as Chancellor on 13th December 1951, he has assisted nearly all the sessions of the National Council and has been in charge of minutes and translations, in addition to advising the President of the Council.

With the news of the pending retirement of Dr. Oser, the discussion as to the duties of a Chancellor was activated once more. Should this office revert to its former importance and should certain co-ordinating duties be allotted to the holder? The Federal Council was in agreement with such an *Aufwertung* of the office as suggested in the report of the Hongler committee of experts.

The United Federal Assembly elected Dr. Karl Huber, Secretary-General of the Federal Department of Economy, as the new Chancellor. He received 126 votes, whilst the Vice-Chancellor Dr. Felix Weber got 51, Dr. H. Bruehwiler 45 and others 8 votes.

Dr. Huber is the ninth Federal Councillor in the 120 years of the Federal State. He hails from St. Gall and is a Roman Catholic. He was born on 18th October 1915, a citizen of Haeggenschwil and son of a bank employee. He had his schooling in St. Gall and studied law at Berne University. He began his career as lawyer in St. Gall, but the war meant long interruptions through military service as Artillery officer. He entered the Federal Administration in 1941. Soon, his outstanding gift for organisation made itself felt, and before he was 40, the office of Secretary-General of the *Volkswirtschaftsdepartement* became his. He has made the Department into a model of organisation, and this augurs well for the new task as Chancellor. His knowledge is profound, but it is his courage and sense of responsibility which will no doubt stand him in good stead. Although a member of the Social Christian Conservatives, Dr. Huber has not been active politically. This has been criticised in some quarters, but generally it is accepted as a good thing, for his loyalty to the country comes above all else.

The new Chancellor is married and has three children. After the elections, the seven Federal Councillors and the new Chancellor were sworn in individually, and after the meeting was adjourned, the individual Parliamentary Parties went to the traditional meals with "their" Federal Councillors. Later in the afternoon, the new President of the National Council and the newly-elected Federal President were accompanied to Zurich where they were accorded a tremendous reception. M.P.s of Central Switzerland's Cantons escorted the new President of the Council of States and the Confederation's Vice-President von Moos to their homes.

President Spuehler, in an address at the festivities in honour of the Heads of both Federal Legislative and Executive, said that the aim of the re-organisation of the Federal Chancellery would be to guarantee the corporate responsibility system of the Government, a much more difficult thing than to adhere to a presidential system. But, he said, it was the only one which corresponded to the ideals of Switzerland's federalistic structure. The Federal Council was going to set up guiding lines for governmental policy in the new year. This effort would have to be made, although there were limits in a country where the citizen and not Parliament had the last word.

(Compiled by the Editor from information received by courtesy of Agency *Télégraphique Suisse* and "Basler Nachrichten".)

THE LARGEST EXPORT CONTRACT OF THE SWISS MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

Brown Boveri's Success

A contract has been signed in New York between American Electric Power, the largest private electric power company in the U.S.A., and Brown Boveri & Co. Ltd., Baden, for the supply of steam turbo sets to the U.S.A. This order will probably prove to be the largest single commitment for steam turbine generators in history and, at the same time, the largest export order ever to be received by the steam turbine industry in any country in Europe.

The commitment includes the firm purchase of two large-size turbine-generators and options for two more. The first turbine-generator which has the capacity of 1,100 MW will be installed in a nuclear plant on Lake Michigan. The three further units will either be installed in nuclear plants or used in conventional coal-fired power plants. In the latter case, the machines will each have a capacity of 1,300 MW. Commissioning of the first unit is planned for 1973.

The first two units on order would be equivalent to just over five per cent of the total generating capacity of the Central Electricity Generating Board. Their size surpasses all existing European electrical machines. Each turbo set will be approximately 210 ft. long and 4,800 tons in weight.

It was stated by the President of American Electric Power that extensive investigations by his organisation into the design, performance and manufacturing capabilities of Brown Boveri satisfied them that the quality and reliability of Brown Boveri's products would meet the high standards of American Electric Power.

This achievement followed the announcement that Brown Boveri had introduced a new range of small-dimensioned, bar-type Contactors, known as the "R" Series, and a new design of Punched-Tape Actuated Programmer in three sizes. In October, it was made known that the 50th Betatron had been completed, destined for the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. The first of these electronic radiation apparatus was delivered to the Zurich Cantonal Hospital in 1950.

The latest news came shortly before Christmas; The North American Rockwell Corporation, El Segundo, California, and Brown Boveri Baden have formed a joint study group to go into the possibility of constructing a manufacturing centre in U.S.A. for powerworks equipment, especially steam turbines and generators according to Brown Boveri technical methods.

THE SWISS CHEMICAL INDUSTRY MAKES ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE WINTER OLYMPICS AT GRENOBLE

With a view to the 1968 Winter Olympic Games, a covered Olympic Ice Stadium has been built at Grenoble with seats for 2,200 and standing room for 700. For technical reasons, the roof of the hall has been built by a French firm specialising in this type of work, of thin sheets of wood glued together. The sheets of pine wood have been glued together by means of the special wood adhesive "Aerodux", which has a synthetic resin base, invented and manufactured by the Swiss chemical products factory Ciba Co. Ltd. in Basle.

[O.S.E.C.]